

**BITTER STREAK - DRAMATIS PERSONAE**

ACTOR	male, mid twenties.
DIRECTOR	a theatre director.
MATE	the ACTOR's best mate from school.
KING	an actor playing Henry V
EXETER	an actor playing a Shakespearean character
HELMET GIRL	a performance artist
STIG	a character in a social realist drama. Angry. Cockney accent.
BARB	a character in a social realist drama. Angry. Cockney accent
IAN	a character in a dull contemporary mainstream drama
FIONA	a character in a dull contemporary mainstream drama
TOM	an actor pretending to be a cat.
MITTENS	an actor pretending to be a cat.
ASST. DIR	an assistant director
OLD FART	an actor of the old school. An old man.
REVIEWER	a theatre reviewer
DAD	the ACTOR's father
PETER	a television salesman
TECH GIRL	a stage manager
MUM	the ACTOR's mother
PUNTER	a person in an opening night foyer
MOIRA	a daytime TV info-mercial presenter
KERRY-ANNE	a chat show host.
FIGURE	a mysterious male silhouette.
TIME	a person carrying a clock
HERALD	a herald

**DESIGN**

The play is set in the eighties, for no apparent reason. Eighties music plays interstitially, and the actors wear variations on 80's gym wear – sweatbands, legwarmers, trackpants, mesh T's, gaudy sport shoes and bad makeup. Think 'Fame'.

**SETTING**

A bare stage, with two chairs and various props lying about.

### **Dance 1**

*Moody lights come up on silhouettes of handsome young people, frozen nobly in various poses. A synthesizer hums. They change poses. The tension builds. Suddenly the neon 'worker' lights clatter on.*

*The mood is broken.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

*Actor enters.*

ACTOR: Theatre really pisses me off.

I'm sure you know what I mean. But the problem is, I'm an *actor*. Not a very good one, but an actor just the same.

The play hasn't really started yet. I just thought I'd come out and have a few words beforehand, because if your expectations are low, then perhaps you'll enjoy this experience more.

If you don't believe what I'm saying, then that's a bit of a worry, because for once in my life I really mean it.

You know, if you don't believe me when I'm just being me, then you can imagine what a crap actor I am when I'm really acting.

I've got an audition coming up. In about 30 seconds. Then you'll get to see me act, and judge for yourself.

If it sounds like I'm whinging, then that's because I am. I'm sick of it.

Something's got to change.

It could be me, it could be you, or it could be theatre itself.

But I digress. Doesn't matter I suppose, because this isn't part of it. It hasn't started yet.

## **Dance 2**

*Bad 80's music plays. The cast, who have stood stock still during the introduction, burst into action, displaying their best dance moves. They bring on two chairs.*

## **A U D I T I O N**

*The ACTOR stands in front of two people on chairs. We cannot see their faces.*

ACTOR: What do you want to see first?  
I've got a Shakespeare and a contemporary Australian piece.

DIRECTOR: Neither, really.

ACTOR: Do you want me to improvise?

ASST. DIRECTOR: No.

ACTOR: Well, what do you want me to do?

DIRECTOR: *(to ASST. DIRECTOR)* I dunno. What'll we make him do?

ASST. DIRECTOR: We could be honest.

*ACTOR shifts nervously, exposed on the floor.*

DIRECTOR: Look, I'll be honest with you

*(pause)*

*Actor is very uncomfortable by this stage.*

DIRECTOR: *(cont)* Look, we've cast it already, and we're having auditions to make it seem fair.

ACTOR: Oh.

DIRECTOR: But we do have a role in mind for you. You seem about the right height and build. You'll be a key part of some of the most crucial scenes.

ASST. DIRECTOR: You don't appear in the first act, but when things really hot up, around the time of the battle scenes, you're on.

DIRECTOR: There's a lot of subtextual work involved in this role.

ACTOR: Great.

ASST. DIRECTOR: You're fairly average...

*The ACTOR furrows his eyebrows.*

DIRECTOR: Yes, he is, isn't he?

ASST. DIRECTOR: So we should be able to find a costume to fit you.  
Grow a beard and come back in three weeks.

ACTOR: So you don't want me to act?

DIRECTOR: No, it'll just be distracting.

ASST. DIRECTOR: Would you mind sending the next one in?

ACTOR: Sure.

*He turns to the audience.*

ACTOR: *(cont)* So that's it.  
I'm a working actor!  
Working for the third biggest theatre company in the state.

For seven weeks out of fifty two I'm working. I'm at the top of the heap and I feel great.

### **Dance 3**

*Music. And again, the cast explode into action, remove the chairs, and place the DIRECTOR*

### **DIRECTOR**

ACTOR: Directors. You can usually tell who they are because they sit up one end of the room and mouth all the words.

There's one now.

*He indicates a DIRECTOR sitting at the other end of the room, who mouths all the ACTOR's words and 'acts along'*

Watch this. "I am a bit of an idiot"

*The DIRECTOR mouths the words.*

You will never hear a director say these words, because it's not their job to tell the truth usually.

If you're doing a bad job they have to lie about what you're doing to make it better.

DIRECTOR: What you just did was great. But it seems a little...You're lacking commitment.

*The ACTOR continues with a little more commitment*

ACTOR: They seem a little odd, mostly. It's good for them to appear preoccupied so it looks like their mind is on weightier issues, things you couldn't possibly understand.

Isn't that right?

*The DIRECTOR still mouths the words. The ACTOR watches him as he speaks.*

ACTOR: Isn't that weird. Isn't. That. weird.

Watch this:

*He walks directly to centrestage*

"he walks directly to centrestage"

See what I did then? I said the stage directions – you're not supposed to do that.  
I learned that early on.

So, moving actors around on the stage is the director's job.  
Watch this.

*The DIRECTOR begins to direct.*

DIRECTOR: That's good, but I think you should move at some time during that line.

ACTOR: Walk slowly?

*The DIRECTOR mouths all the ACTOR's lines in this scene.*

DIRECTOR: Yeees...

ACTOR: That's the yes that means no. That's another thing directors do.

DIRECTOR: Just move. Do what you feel.

ACTOR: OK.

*He prepares. He moves during the line.*

'So, moving actors around on the stage is the director's job.'  
How was that?

DIRECTOR: Yeess...

ACTOR: See? He's doing it again.

DIRECTOR: Try it faster.

ACTOR: Often they don't know what they want until they see what they don't.  
That's part of the magic of theatre.

It gets even more complex when the actors don't know what they're doing, which is often the case.

*He moves quickly as he says the line.*

'So, moving the actors around is the director's job.'

DIRECTOR: No, no, no. Do it like this.

*The DIRECTOR gets up and demonstrates*

DIRECTOR: 'So, moving the actors around on stage is the director's job.'

*The ACTOR mimics the DIRECTOR.*

ACTOR: 'So, moving the actors around on stage is the director's job.'  
Like that?

DIRECTOR: Mmm. I liked it better when I did it.

ACTOR: Me too.

DIRECTOR: Yes. Let's have a break and a cup of tea.

*The DIRECTOR leaves.*

ACTOR: That's also what they do, generously bestow breaks on their cast when they've lost the plot a bit. Often while treating their crew like shit.

*To the TECHNICAL STAFF.*

Why do you put up with it?

*A TECH GIRL enters with a cup of tea for the director and shrugs.*

#### **Dance 4**

*Music. The dancers bring on MATE*

#### **M A T E**

*Another guy about the same age as the ACTOR enters and hands him an imaginary beer.*

MATE: Well, if you think it sucks, why do you do it?

ACTOR: I dunno, you take a guess. You've known me for what...

MATE: Ten years or so. We went to school together, and have only just recently renewed our acquaintance. We're like chalk and cheese, but really good buddies.

ACTOR: Exposition.

MATE: What?

ACTOR: Nothing.

MATE: Are you taking the piss?

ACTOR: No.

MATE: You haven't changed a bit.

*He mimes drinking from the glass.*

Do I have to keep doing this?

ACTOR: No, I think they get the picture.

MATE: So I can just talk to you.

ACTOR: Yeah. Just act natural.

MATE: Act. Natural.

*He acts natural.*

Acting's actually pretty easy, isn't it?

ACTOR: Well, the *act* of acting is kinda easy, but being an actor is fucked.



MATE: Well stop it then.

ACTOR: But I like it. I just find theatre boring. When was the last time you went to the theatre?

MATE: I don't go to the theatre. I go to the movies.

ACTOR: Why?

MATE: Because in the movies I can watch cars explode and stuff, things that if I did in everyday life I'd get arrested for. Whereas theatre is like getting stuck next to some boring old cunt at a wedding who starts to tell you his life story whether you want to hear it or not.

You can walk out of a movie thinking, fuck that was crap, but I liked the way the cars blew up, but you walk away from the boring old cunt thinking 'well, I'll never sit next to some boring old cunt again.'

ACTOR: You've been thinking about this.

MATE: No, it's pretty obvious really. I don't know why you're so tied up in knots over it.

ACTOR: It's my life.

MATE: Well, if theatre is your life, and theatre is fucked, then change it.

ACTOR: How?

MATE: I dunno. I'm an article clerk. I guess make the plays more Interesting, something that'll really get the punters in, knock their socks off.

ACTOR: My socks haven't been knocked off in years.

MATE: Theatre makes your feet stink.

ACTOR: Yeah.

MATE: Yeah.

MATE: Do you want to go to the cricket?

ACTOR: Can't . It's opening night tonight. Wanna come?

MATE: Why would I want to go to the theatre?

ACTOR: Because I'm your mate.

MATE: Ah, mateship. The love that dare not speak its name.

ACTOR: Come on, it'll be great to have someone in the audience who has some common sense.

MATE: Do we get pissed?

ACTOR: After.

MATE: Let's do it.

*The MATE exits.*

ACTOR: Theatre. There's a lot of it about. [insert day here] night in Brisbane. You could go to any number of performances. But you're here. Thanks for that. There's heaps of shows on at the moment. Here are a few.

*Transition music 1*

## **PERFORMANCE ART**

*A young woman in a motorcycle helmet enters and places three balls in front of her on the floor. She seems tense, angry. Sincere.*

HELMET  
GIRL:

It's a juggling act, you know. Who I was, who I am and who I may become.

Who I am to become may depend on what I have been and what I am now.

Even as I speak, what I am now becomes the me of the past.

This is the world I live in.

Some people say I've got a lot of balls.

It's a juggling act.

*She picks up the juggling balls.*

My Sexuality.

*The ACTOR enters. HELMET GIRL'S act continues. Juggling and interpretive movement.*

ACTOR: The lucky thing here is she can call it performance art and then if it's not interesting she'll get away with it.

*HELMET GIRL finishes her act and leaves the stage, intensely*

*Transition music 2*

## **I N D E P E N D E N T   T H E A T R E**

*A young man and a young woman enter. Perhaps they have cockney accents.*

STIG: We've got to leave this town.

BARB: Why?

STIG: There's more to life.

BARB: Is there? What?

STIG: What?

BARB: Get fucked.

*The ACTOR enters. STIG and BARB glare at each other, not acknowledging his presence.*

ACTOR: Aah. Theatre with a message.  
You know what the message of this play is?  
"Hello everyone, we can make theatre!"

If you want to change the world, sponsor a child off the TV or something. Do not make a play.

*Transition music 3*

## **STATE THEATRE COMPANY**

*The lighting changes to a lovely, dappled state. A male and female actor appear.*

**IAN AND FIONA.**

*They 'sit on the jetty' and act in a naturalistic, wooden, 'mature' fashion.*

**IAN:** Was that me in your novel?

**FIONA:** No, just someone like you.

**IAN:** Don't bullshit me, Fiona, you can't keep using us like this.

**FIONA:** Using you? How am I using you?

**IAN:** Inviting us here for this reunion. More stories. I don't want my life to be used as fodder for your pulp.

**FIONA:** Ian, I'm pregnant.

*IAN and FIONA stare into each other's eyes for a moment, then meander off the stage, still acting.*

**ACTOR:** Nice lighting.

And, Jesus, the thing is, big theatre companies like this are always going to be criticised, no matter who runs them.

There's always got to be a 'them'.

Until you become one of 'them' in which case you'll have to find a new 'them' which might well have been 'you' at one stage.

Shit, I'm sounding like that bloody juggler.

And can I just say this? There is nothing dramatic about the act of writing. Take my word for it. Do not go and see a play about a writer at any time.

*Transition Music 4*

## MUSICALS

*The lighting becomes two spotlights. Music is heard.*

*The male and female actor appear with cat ears on, moving in a tightly choreographed and extremely stupid manner.*

*They sing:*

TOM and  
MITTENS: Cats cats lurking in the night  
Listen to us sing listen to us fight  
Meet Tom he's a lover boy  
and Mittens who lives at the port

*The rest of the cast join in on the big finale*

Cats cats cats we'll give you paws for thought.

*They hold a pose, claws bared, then exit.*

ACTOR: In my opinion, people who are in musicals... deserve to be in them.

See! Theatre is, on the whole, completely fucked.  
So, I'm glad you're here.

## INSPIRATION AND EXPIRATION

ACTOR: There was once this old actor I knew.

I was in a play with him once. In many ways he was past his best, apart from drinking, which he was pretty excellent at. I had a conversation with him once in a basement dressing room. We were talking, of all things, about Bryan Brown.

*The other male actor appears on stage in a single light.*

*He is the OLD FART. He wears a fedora at a rakish angle.*

*'The other male actor appears on stage in a single light.'*

Did I think that or say it? Oops.

OLD FART: You know the thing about Bryan Brown?

ACTOR: What?

OLD FART: They don't make actors like Bryan Brown anymore.

ACTOR: Mmm?

OLD FART: Can't get the wood.

ACTOR: I'm leaving a gap for the laugh. It's as old as the hills, that joke, but so was he. Then it was his cue to go on. I followed his saggy arse up the stairs and watched him from the wings.

And I'll never forget it.

He performed... it's hard to describe – it was... oh, he was standing there, finding his light, hitting the mark perfectly. You know, when it just works – when you believe.

Not in a tinkerbelle sort of way, but when you're truly carried to a different place by the story.

I can't remember the speech, but at the end of it he let out this cross between a sigh and a roar that meant more than any line of dialogue.

And I saw it, lingering in the light, this mist, a small cloud of pure humanity expelled from his mouth. And it meant something. I don't know what, but it moved me indescribably.

After the show I went up on stage and stood where he was, hoping to breathe the same air as he did, to capture a small piece of the magic he'd unleashed.

I breathed in deeply, but all I could smell was brandy.  
I saw him, years later, sitting out the front of one of those Spring Hill boarding houses.  
He hassled me for a cigarette.  
He didn't remember me at all.

*The light goes out on the OLD FART.*

*He exits and bumps into something on the way out.*

OLD FART: Ow! Bugger it.



## Dance 5

*Music. Everyone dances into their next position.*

## BACKSTAGE, OPENING NIGHT

*The ACTOR stands onstage with the KING, who is totally absorbed in the absurd vocal acrobatics of a voice warm up.*

*He's wearing the crown and army jacket.*

*The ACTOR stands as far away from him as possible.*

KING: Huummmaahh.  
Jesus, my vocal folds are really dry. I don't know if I'm going to make it through the show.

*The KING lights a cigarette and continues his warm up.*

ACTOR: I bought you an opening night present.

*The KING ignores him, making more stupid noises, smoke coming out of his mouth and nose.*

KING: Humm humm hummamaaah.

ACTOR: I bought you an opening night present.

KING: What? Oh, sorry.

ACTOR: I bought you an opening night present.

*He gives it to the KING, who puts it on a nearby chair, not opening it. It's a bottle wrapped in cellophane.*

KING: What is it?

ACTOR: It's a Crown lager. You're playing the King. Crown.

KING: Ta.

TECH GIRL: (V/O) Ladies and Gentlemen of the cast of Henry V, this is your Act One Beginners. Have a great opening night.

*THE KING prepares himself, and goes to exit.*

ACTOR: Good luck.

KING: (offhand) Yeah, have a good one, mate.

*A woman, also in army gear and wearing a false beard enters. She's EXETER. The KING hugs her deeply.*

EXETER: Chookas, babe.

KING: Yeah, break a leg. We'll slay 'em

EXETER: Slay them! That's great. Fuck you're a funny cunt.

*They exit, leaving the ACTOR alone.*

ACTOR: Well, that's it. I'm not on until half an hour into the show. I've got all this time to prepare for my big moment. See you in half an hour.

*A brash, warlike fanfare is heard. Actors throw themselves into a kind of choreographed battle sequence, drawing on the traditions of Asian theatre, rather poorly.*

*KING and EXETER enter, grandly, the rest of the cast are either contorted into death throes, or standing guard.*

## **IN THE WINGS**

*The muffled sounds of the performance can be heard. The ACTOR speaks in hushed tones. He holds two envelopes.*

*Tense music plays*

ACTOR: I'm about to go on. My preparation has rendered me ripe for performance. I'm ready to be plucked, by you, the audience. I can hear you salivating. You can't wait to sink your teeth into my performance and I can't wait to see the juices running down your chin. Here we go.

*The ACTOR jogs on the spot briefly, and then runs 'onstage' He enters, and the lights come up on the KING and EXETER.*

## THE PLAY

*The other two actors are very serious and absorbed.  
It's just after a battle or something. The play's set in one of the  
world wars.  
The ACTOR appears, 'puffed after a long and urgent run.'*

KING: Now, herald, are the dead number'd?

ACTOR: Here is the number of the slaughtered French.

*He hands over one of the envelopes, to EXETER, the woman with  
the false beard. He salutes, stands to attention, steps back and  
listens.*

KING: What prisoners of good sort are taken, uncle?

EXETER: Charles Duke of Orleans, nephew to the King:  
John Duke of Bourbon, and Lord Bouciqualt:  
Of other lords and barons, knights and squires,  
Full fifteen hundred, besides common men.

*The ACTOR reacts slightly, nodding minutely in a fairly  
indeterminate way, then stands to attention even more stiffly.  
He's pretty good, but he's not been given much to do.  
The KING takes the note from EXETER and reads.*

KING: This note doth tell me of ten thousand French  
That in this field lie slain: of princes; in this number, and nobles  
bearing banners, there lie dead one hundred and twenty six: added  
to these, of knights, esquires, and gallant gentlemen,  
Eight thousand and four hundred; of the which  
Five hundred were but yesterday dubbed knights:  
So that, in these ten thousand they have lost,  
There are but sixteen hundred mercenaries;  
The rest are princes, lords, knights, squires,  
And gentlemen of blood and quality  
the names of those their nobles lie dead:

*This speech is pretty dull, isn't it?  
The ACTOR tries as hard as he can to be engaged.  
Tiny movements of his eyes indicate how hard he's trying.*

KING: (cont.) Charles Delabreth, High Constable of France;  
Jaques of Chatillon, Admiral of France;  
The Master of the Crossbows, Lord Rambures;

Great Master of France, the brave Sir Gerard Dolphin,  
John Duke of Alcenon, Anthony, Duke of Brabany,  
The brother to the Duke of Burgundy,  
And Edward Duke of Bar: of lusty earls,  
Granpre and Roussi, Fouconberg and Foix,  
Beaumont and Marle, Vaudemont and Lestrade.  
Here was a royal fellowship of death!  
Where is the number of our English dead?

*The ACTOR stands more stiffly to attention, shuffles forward and presents the other envelope to the king. Then he steps back, salutes, turns and jogs off efficiently.  
The lights go down on the KING and EXETER as their waffle continues.*

*The ACTOR comes out and encourages the audience to applaud. Grand music plays. The CAST come and worship the actor choreographically: **Dance 6***

*He bows as if he's just performed Lear.*

ACTOR: Thankyou, thankyou very much.

*He bows deeply and mops his brow, taking the piss out of the 'exhausted actor' routine.*

*He leaves the 'stage' and returns again, devoid of costume, holding a Crown lager.*

## THE FOYER

*The ACTOR enters the foyer, moving slowly. He's smoking a cigarette. There seem to be a lot of people there, the CAST over-acting the antics of a foyer.*

*The actor who played the KING passes and waves regally.  
The ACTOR hides the crown lager he's drinking.  
The female actor approaches. She's a PUNTER.*

ACTOR: What did you think?

*One of the actors stops, assumes a character and speaks. Her eyes wander, searching the 'crowd' for someone else to speak to.*

PUNTER: Terrific. The design was really terrific.

*The PUNTER waves to someone across the foyer. She returns her gaze to the ACTOR. She has nothing to say. Neither does he.*

PUNTER: Well, I was just on my way to the bar.

ACTOR: Aren't we all?

*He looks around, concerned.*

Where's my mate?

*He buttonholes another punter, this one's a REVIEWER.*

ACTOR: What did you think?

REVIEWER: I'm still processing it.

ACTOR: First impressions?

REVIEWER: It's a terrific text.

ACTOR: It's Shakespeare.

REVIEWER: Yes, I know. It's great to see it bought from page to stage, no matter how it's done.

ACTOR: Right.

REVIEWER: I think I'll drop in to see it again. I'm thinking of doing a feature piece on the director for The Australian.

*The REVIEWER is getting bored talking to the ACTOR.  
He acknowledges someone across the foyer.*

ACTOR: Cool.

REVIEWER: Well, I should go. I've just found someone to talk to.

*The two other actors link arms. They're the ACTOR's MUM and DAD. The ACTOR sees them approaching.*

ACTOR: Shit, it's Mum and Dad.

*He stubs out his cigarette.*

DAD: G'day son. Thanks. Really enjoyed it.

MUM: He had a bit of a snooze in the third act.

DAD: I got the gist.

*His MUM kisses him.*

MUM: I was so proud of you.

DAD: She was.

ACTOR: Thanks. Thanks for coming.

DAD: Well, thanks for the freebies.

ACTOR: You don't want to hang around for a drink, meet some of the others?

MUM: No thanks. Mr. Grumpy wants to go home. He's always a bit irritable when he's just woken up.

DAD: Nothing personal, son, just not my kind of crowd.

ACTOR: Fair enough.

*They leave. The ACTOR is deflated.  
TIME passes, walking briskly. This is a woman with a clock.*

**LATER IN THE FOYER**

ACTOR: Doesn't time pass quickly when you're having fun?

*EXETER is sitting on a chair, wearing her false beard in an interesting manner. She is telling a story.*

EXETER: And anyway, sitting in front of me in the next row was Geoffrey Rush, and he was cacking himself, really loving it. I saw him later in the foyer, and I spoke to him.

ACTOR: *(uninterested)* What about?

EXETER: Acting. What it means.  
We were on the level, you know, seeing eye to eye. Just one actor talking to another actor.  
And then I got his autograph.

ACTOR: *(knowing the answer)* Where?

EXETER: On my tit.

*She laughs, loud and long. The ACTOR is getting down.*

*He continues drinking.  
His MATE arrives. He stands.*

ACTOR: Where did you get to?

MATE: Sorry, bud, but I couldn't stand it. Did you see that poor old cunt who fell asleep?

ACTOR: That was my Dad.

MATE: Ha! Anyway, I had to go.

ACTOR: That was you?

MATE: I left as quietly as I could. The cricket was getting good.

ACTOR: How did you know?

MATE: Walkman. How did it go?

ACTOR: Well, you saw how it went.

MATE: How did it go down?

ACTOR: Well, I dunno. Nobody here tells the truth.

MATE: Most of these wankers wouldn't know their elbow from their arse.

ACTOR: That could make the sex pretty interesting.

*The MATE looks around at the foyer crowd.*

MATE: Jesus Christ. Look at them.

ACTOR: Well, what did you think?

MATE: Boring as bat shit.

ACTOR: At last. The truth.

MATE: Is theatre always like that?

ACTOR: Pretty much. You missed out on my bit.

MATE: Sorry. It was really pissing me off. I felt like I was wasting my time even being there.

ACTOR: Imagine what it's like if you're in it.

MATE: Shit, mate, you seem a bit down. Everything alright?

ACTOR: No.

MATE: Do you want to talk about it?

ACTOR: No.

MATE: Thank god for that. Look, I'm sorry I couldn't hang around.

ACTOR: Will you come and see it again on a non-cricket night?

MATE: Wild horses couldn't drag me back into that auditorium, mate.

ACTOR: Right.

*The MATE senses the seriousness of the situation. His buddy's depressed.*



MATE: Look, if it's boring, why don't you do something to spice it up a bit?

ACTOR: Like what?

MATE: Well... what's something you're not supposed to do onstage?

ACTOR: I dunno.

MATE: What about dacking someone?

ACTOR: Not real subtle.

*His MATE thinks.*

MATE: I've got it.

ACTOR: What?

MATE: Fart.

ACTOR: Fart?

MATE: Fart. I'll bet you fifty bucks you can't fart onstage during the performance.

*The ACTOR considers the offer.*

ACTOR: Does it have to be audible?

MATE: Not necessarily. It just has to have some sort of effect, even if it's only to give you a bit of a jolly, you miserable bastard.

*The ACTOR smiles for the first time in a while.*

ACTOR: OK, I'll do it. But you have to be there to see it.

MATE: Can you give me a bit of an idea when you'll be doing it?  
When I found out there were going to be two intervals that was the final nail in the coffin for me.

ACTOR: Second act. We'll go out for a curry before, and I'll give you a call on the mobile during the first interval.

MATE: What are you doing all that time you're not on stage?

ACTOR: Sitting around.

MATE: Can I come backstage and hang out?

ACTOR: Why?

MATE: I've got no life.

ACTOR: I think you'll find it's not all glamour.

MATE: Sure. Takeaway curry, and watching female actors get changed. Then I'll come up and watch you fart. Sounds like a top night.

ACTOR: The girls are in a different dressing room.

MATE: Can I watch you get dressed then? You look like you've been working out.

*The ACTOR looks at his MATE and realises he's taking the piss.*

MATE: See you tomorrow night,.

ACTOR: Don't you want to hang around for a drink?

MATE: Take a look around, mate.

*The MATE leaves the stage. The ACTOR looks around at the drunken crowd. EXETER spews into a rubbish bin. The ACTOR looks at the audience and smiles a wicked smile. Music. Blackout.*

### THIRD LARGEST THEATRE COMPANY 2

*The other two actors are very serious and absorbed, though perhaps a little hung over.  
They perform the same dialogue as before.  
The ACTOR appears, 'puffed after a long and urgent run.'  
He seems a little happier than the last time we saw him perform.*

KING: Now, herald, are the dead number'd?

ACTOR: Here is the number of the slaughtered French.

*He hands over one of the envelopes to EXETER.  
The ACTOR tries to fart at this moment. No good.  
His face contorts slightly.  
The KING gives him a funny look.*

KING: What prisoners of good sort are taken, uncle?

*The ACTOR salutes and returns to position, standing to attention.*

EXETER: Charles Duke of Orleans, nephew to the King:  
John Duke of Bourbon, and Lord Bouciqualt:  
Of other lords and barons, knights and squires,  
Full fifteen hundred, besides common men.

*The ACTOR's lips purse. He's still trying to push out a fart.  
No. No good. He lifts one leg slightly to open the passage.  
Not a sausage.*

*EXETER and the KING are a little distracted.*

*The KING takes the note from EXETER and reads.*

KING: This note doth tell me of ten thousand French  
That in this field lie slain: of princes; in this number, and nobles  
bearing banners, there lie dead one hundred and twenty six: added  
to these, of knights, esquires, and gallant gentlemen,  
Eight thousand and four hundred; of the which  
Five hundred were but yesterday dubbed knights:  
So that, in these ten thousand they have lost,  
There are but sixteen hundred mercenaries;  
The rest are princes, lords, knights, squires,  
And gentlemen of blood and quality  
the names of those their nobles lie dead:

*The ACTOR is almost at the point of giving up. The curry hasn't worked.  
His mind wanders.*

KING: (cont.) Charles Delabreth, High Constable of France;  
Jaques of Chatillon, Admiral of France;  
The Master of the Crossbows, Lord Rambures;  
Great Master of France, the brave Sir Gerard Dolphin,  
John Duke of Alcenon, Anthony, Duke of Brabany,  
The brother to the Duke of Burgundy,

*Another fart? Nup. Just like a policeman. Never one around when you want one.*

And Edward Duke of Bar: of lusty earls,  
Granpre and Roussi, Fouconberg and Foix,  
Beaumont and Marle, Vaudemont and Lestrale.  
Here was a royal fellowship of death!  
Where is the number of our English dead?

*The ACTOR does not react.*

Herald, where is the number of our English dead?

*The ACTOR jolts into action. He was miles away.*

ACTOR: Here, sire.

*He drops the letter. And goes to retrieve it, covering the action as part of a deep bow.  
This throws the KING. So the KING decides to improvise to cover the mistake.*

KING: Prithee, are ye weary from battle, my good man?

*The ACTOR hands over the letter and refuses to play along.*

*The KING takes the second letter and is just about to launch into another boring litany.*

*Suddenly a masked NUDE MAN appears out of one of the wings and runs across the stage, yelping joyfully, penis flapping in the breeze.  
He disappears into the dark.*

*All onstage are stunned. The ACTOR can't believe his eyes.*

*EXETER gathers herself. She continues, trying to recreate the mood.*

EXETER: Sire, the English dead?

KING: Yes, the English dead.

*The KING's lost his lines.*

EXETER: Edward the Duke of York?

*The KING remembers his line.*

KING: Yes, Edward the Duke of York, yes, he's dead and...

*He's lost it again.*

EXETER: The Earl of Suffolk, Sir Richard Kelty?

*The ACTOR realises he should have exited by now. He salutes efficiently and sprints off. The lights fade on the KING and EXETER as the litany continues.*

*TIME passes. This is a person carrying a clock.*

## BACK IN THE DRESSING ROOM

*The ACTOR returns to the dressing room alone.*

*The murmur of the performance continues above him.  
There is a pile of clothes on the floor.*

*He looks at the audience and smiles.*

*The KING and EXETER storm into the dressing room, livid.*

KING: What the fuck was that?

*The smile leaves the ACTOR's lips. He begins to act.*

ACTOR: I don't know. The moment I came off I had a scout around, but I couldn't find him. All I found were these.

*He picks up the pile of clothes.  
The KING looks at them.*

KING: Dirty fuckin' cunt. If I find out who did this I'll have his balls.

EXETER: Where's your boyfriend?

*She still has her false beard on.*

ACTOR: He's not my boyfriend. We're just mates.

EXETER: Whatever. Where is he now?

ACTOR: He's gone. Had to work tomorrow.

KING: It was him?

ACTOR: No, I don't think so. He's a lawyer.

EXETER: What was he doing back here?

ACTOR: Helping me with my lines.

KING: Jesus, you fuckin' need help. You only had two lines in that last scene and you still managed to fuck them up.

EXETER: Should we stop the show?

KING: We should definitely call the police.

EXETER: Fucking bastard, he's made a fucking mockery of the whole thing.

KING: Spoiled four week's work. I'm calling the cops.

*He exits.*

EXETER: And the guy from The Australian was here tonight. Fuck it. This is fucked.

ACTOR: Yeah, it's really disrespectful.

EXETER: Oh, fuck, fuck, how are we going to get that audience back? Did you hear them? They were pissing themselves. It was hell up there.

ACTOR: Don't worry. It'll be fine. Come on.

*Even through the false beard it's clear she's a little upset.  
The ACTOR takes advantage and hugs her.*

*Suddenly the MATE runs into the dressing room, a little puffed,  
holding a burger.*

*EXETER turns, sees him, pushes the ACTOR away and snarls.*

EXETER: Why did you do that?

MATE: Do what?

EXETER: You know.

ACTOR: He didn't do it.

EXETER: How do you know?

ACTOR: He's got clothes on.

EXETER: Well whose are these?

ACTOR: I dunno.

EXETER: *(to MATE)* How did you get back here?

MATE: I'm just getting my mate a burger. Is this something to do with the guy I just saw running up the road in the nuddie?

ACTOR: Someone just streaked our show.

*MATE's face drops. He looks truly horrified.  
Performance of a lifetime.*

MATE: You're kidding.

ACTOR: No.

MATE: How'd it go down?

EXETER: Fucked. We'll never get them back.  
I think they enjoyed it more than the show.

*MATE raises his eyebrows slightly to ACTOR.*

MATE: Have you called the police?

ACTOR: Henry the Fifth's doing it.

MATE: Good. This is a serious offence. He'll be in deep shit if they catch him. Indecent exposure, trespass, maybe even break and enter, not to mention the trauma it's caused to the performers.

*They nod, gravely. The ACTOR indicates his MATE as if to say 'smart guy, eh?'*

*EXETER steels herself and gets it together.*

EXETER: Right. The show must go on. I'll see you up there.

ACTOR: Right. Have a good one.

EXETER: Well, it can't get any worse.

*She exits.*

*The ACTOR and his MATE are left alone onstage.*

*They look at each other. In a silent moment, they understand.*

*TIME passes. Applause*



## POST SHOW

*The ACTOR sits in the dressing room.  
The sound of the play ending can be heard above.  
As the final line is spoken, huge applause is heard. The ACTOR  
looks up in surprise.*

*The KING and EXETER enter. The applause continues.*

KING: Fuck, man, they loved it! Shall we go up again?

EXETER: No. Wait.

*She listens. The applause continues.*

EXETER: Fuck it. It's one of the few rewards we get. Let's go up and revel in it.

*They join hands and run out to take another bow.  
The applause continues.*

*The ACTOR doesn't join them, but looks to where they went and  
shakes his head.*

*In a moment the KING returns, and begins to remove his crown and  
jacket, standing in front of the mirror and admiring himself as he  
does so.*

KING: Good show tonight, mate.

ACTOR: Don't call me mate.

KING: Why not?

ACTOR: You were a real cunt to me at interval.

KING: Well, I'd just had a streaker run through my scene. You'd be a bit upset if that happened to you.

ACTOR: I was there. It was my scene too.

*The KING ignores this comment and changes the subject.*

KING: Why did they love it so much tonight? I've never had applause like that before.

*The KING does his hair.*

ACTOR: Because for once something different happened at the theatre. The audience were aware that they were watching a live performance, that at any time something could go wrong, that theatre can actually be interesting. Like at the circus when you cheer the acrobats even though it takes them three goes to get a trick right. You're there with them, you want them to succeed. And when they finally do, you go apeshit, and applaud them harder than you would've if they'd got it right the first time. That's how I figure it.

*The KING is totally self-absorbed. He didn't hear any of the above.*

KING: I really nailed 'once more unto the breach' tonight. That's got to be it. I managed to turn the whole play around with that speech. Fuck I'm good.

### **Dance 7**

*The CAST, triumphant, head to the notes session, congratulating each other*

## NOTES SESSION

*The DIRECTOR stands with a drink, a crumpled up bit of paper and a pen. EXETER wanders on, still cleaning off makeup.  
The ACTOR wanders on, fairly disinterested.  
The DIRECTOR addresses the assembled cast.*

DIRECTOR: Everyone here?

ACTOR: The King's not here yet.

DIRECTOR: Where is he?

EXETER: I think he found tonight's performance extra-draining.

ACTOR: He's doing his hair.

DIRECTOR: Well, no wonder. Yes, let's let him be. Wasn't he terrific tonight?

ACTOR: Terrific.

DIRECTOR: Saved us from disaster.

EXETER: Sure did.

DIRECTOR: *(to EXETER)* Could you pass these notes on to him, please?

EXETER: No problem.

DIRECTOR: Well, terrific job tonight, people. A difficult one. You coped very well with an incredibly difficult situation. A streaker at the theatre. Absolutely disgusting. Shakespeare would spin in his grave. But you, you rose above it.

*The ACTOR registers this and snorts.*

OK, so, my notes. I was just enthralled by what you did tonight, but I think it's important for you to retain the muscularity of the show, to hold the reins tighter, not let it get out of control.

*The ACTOR is looking pretty skeptical.*

Some specific notes...

*He consults his bit of paper.*

Exeter, keep on... don't know. Ha ha. Can't read my own writing.

Um, general note to everyone, if you're feeling lost, like you're overboard, drowning, the lifebelt will be your text. The text. Do I make myself clear?

EXETER: Crystal.

DIRECTOR: And, 'herald' who's that?

*The ACTOR raises his hand.*

DIRECTOR: What was going on tonight during the 'list of the prisoners and dead?'

ACTOR: Is that a rhetorical question?

DIRECTOR: I don't like your attitude.

ACTOR: I don't give a shit.

DIRECTOR: I'm not going to dignify that with a response.  
Are you going to answer my question? What was going on during that scene?

ACTOR: I was trying to push out a fart.

*The DIRECTOR is shocked.*

To win a bet.

DIRECTOR: Are you quite alright there?

ACTOR: No, I'm not. I just wanted to make sure I got all your notes.

*He counts them off on his fingers*

Hold the reins tighter, muscularity, the text is your lifebelt.  
Yes, without exception, every single one of the notes you've just given us has been total horse shit.

DIRECTOR: Oh, dear, somebody's a bit hung over from opening night.

ACTOR: No, I'm not actually. The headache I've got is you.  
You're among the worst directors I've ever had to work with, and that's a pretty hotly contested title.

I am amazed, though, at how you've managed to cast this play entirely with fuckwits, none of whom understand a single one of the words in 'the text..the text'.

You're a bunch of fucking kids showing off.

You don't give a fuck if anyone enjoys this play or not.

All you want is applause, anything that feeds your egos and further convinces you that you are artistic and interesting people. Well, I'm here to tell you, people. You aren't artistic, or interesting.

Sometimes I wonder if you're actually people. This...this...this isn't art, it's just attention seeking.

*The ACTOR has, indeed, got everyone's attention. The irony is not lost.*

DIRECTOR: Finished?

ACTOR: Yes. I guess I am.

*The ACTOR turns and leaves. Just before he goes, he pushes out a little fart.*

Wrap your nostrils around that one.

### **Dance 8**

*The CAST dance the 'acting is reacting' dance*

## THE NEXT NIGHT IN THE CAR

*The ACTOR and his MATE sit on the two chairs. They're driving a car.*

*Both have blankets wrapped around them. The ACTOR holds a small travel bag in his lap. He seems on edge.*

MATE: This is cool. My life's interesting all of a sudden. I feel like I'm in a movie or something.

*The ACTOR seems preoccupied.*

ACTOR: Right.

MATE: You know, sometimes I wish I could do what you do.

ACTOR: Be an actor?

MATE: Yeah, I reckon I'd be a good one.

ACTOR: Most people who become actors are trying to heal a deep psychological wound with the love of an audience.

*Pause*

MATE: Isn't it just.. pretending?

ACTOR: yeah, I guess it is.

MATE: Come on, cheer up.

ACTOR: You didn't lose your job last night.

MATE: Come on, mate, you're a revolutionary. After tonight, nothing's going to be the same ever again.

ACTOR: I wanted to make a mark, but this wasn't quite what I had in mind.

MATE: Come on, we're making history here. It'll be a cack.

ACTOR: Do you really think this'll change things?

MATE: I don't give a fuck. I can't fuckin' wait.

ACTOR: Thanks.

MATE: What for?

ACTOR: Everything. Talking. It's been good to share. Openly. With another man.

*There is an uncomfortable pause. His MATE laughs.*

MATE: I didn't know you cared.

*The car 'pulls up'.*

ACTOR: Sorry.

MATE: You ready?

ACTOR: As I'll ever be.

MATE: Fingerprints?

ACTOR: Taken care of.

*They open the doors and get out. The ACTOR carries the bag.*

MATE: Let's do it.

*The ACTOR gets out two pairs of gardening gloves. He hands one pair to his MATE. They put them on.*

MATE: Did you hear that?

*The ACTOR jumps, looking around frantically.*

ACTOR: What?

MATE: I said 'let's do it'. That's what they always say in the movies before something cool happens.

ACTOR: Right.

MATE: Say it.

ACTOR: No.

MATE: Say it.

ACTOR

and MATE  
in unison:

Let's do it.

*They exit, running barefoot into the night, blankets flying in the breeze behind them.*

*Transition 1.5*



## PERFORMANCE ART 2

*The lights come up on HELMET GIRL. Her performance continues. She holds a unicycle and a bunch of artichokes.*

HELMET  
GIRL:

Trouble and pain. Intimacy.  
Love and pain go hand in hand, just as I've gone hand in hand with  
girls and boys, women and men.

Avert your gaze or look as long as you like. I am who I am.

*She brandishes the unicycle angrily.*

It's a balancing act – just watch me. You know you want to watch.  
But this is me. My story, not yours.

*She goes to mount the unicycle.*

*Suddenly a NUDE MAN wearing cheap cardboard elephant mask  
and gardening gloves runs right through her performance.*

*She stands, stock still.*

*The man is gone. She follows in hot pursuit, taking her unicycle and  
artichokes with her.*

*Blackout.*

*Transition 2.5*

**INDEPENDENT THEATRE 2**

*The lights come up on STIG and BARB. They're in the middle of a really dramatic scene. They hold hands. It's some sort of emotional tug 'o' war.*

STIG: Come on, let's go.

BARB: I can't go.

STIG: Why not?

BARB: Because I want to stay.

STIG: Why?

BARB: Because this is my home.

STIG: But your home is with me in my heart.

*BARB starts to cry.*

STIG: Come on, there's nothing for us here. Let's build a future together, in a new town. A new life. Together.

*Suddenly a NUDE MAN runs across the stage.  
He is wearing a monkey mask. And gardening gloves.*

*STIG and BARB stop what they were doing, stunned.  
Then BARB starts to really cry.*

*Blackout.*

*Transition 3.5*

**STATE THEATRE COMPANY 2**

*IAN and FIONA stand on the jetty, still arguing.  
He holds a book and points to it.*

IAN: Jesus Fiona, this is my life. This is my family.  
You can't take it away from me

FIONA: I never wanted to take anything from you. Nobody will know.  
It's fiction, Ian, fiction.

IAN: If it's all fiction, then why does it hurt so much?  
Is this pain I'm feeling merely a figment of my imagination?

FIONA: I wanted to celebrate, not destroy. I'm sorry. It's all gone wrong.

*She exits.*

IAN: Well, it's a bit late for apologies.

*She's gone.*

*IAN launches into his big monologue.  
He opens the book and reads from it poetically.*

IAN: And with that, he walked away from me, walking down the jetty  
towards the sparkling sea...

*At that moment, a NUDE MAN runs through the show, wearing a  
cow mask and gardening gloves.*

*IAN stops and stares. He's gone. He resumes his performance.  
Unsteadily. He ceremoniously closes the book and calls.*

IAN: Fiona, Fiona! Don't walk away from me. you can't just walk away  
from this !

*He's gaining confidence. He's about to run in the direction FIONA  
went when HELMET GIRL runs across the stage waving a bunch of  
artichokes.*

HELMET  
GIRL:

Come back here, you misogynist prick!

*She's gone. IAN sighs and shrugs. Blackout.*

*Transition 4.5*

## **MUSICALS 2**

*TOM the cat prowls cattily along a wall.*

*MITTENS serenades him, singing a beautiful ballad.  
The mood is romantic.*

MITTENS: We all feel the need inside of us  
You feel it when you hold a kitten  
That feeling can't be denied in us,  
It's when you're gone, you're smitten...

*She's leading up to a killer chorus.*

*Becauuuuuse....*

*Then a NUDE MAN runs across the stage, wearing a pig mask and  
gardening gloves. He does a lewd little dance and then scarpers.*

*TOM chases him offstage.*

*MITTENS stands there, not sure what to do.  
She tries to sing her song again. She starts a box step.*

MITTENS: Becauuuuuse...  
We all like a bit of pussy in the night...

*Her backing tape grinds to a halt.*

*MITTENS makes as graceful an exit as she can, slowly regaining  
her feline character as she leaves the stage and the lights dim.*

## **OLD FART 2**

*A single spotlight comes up on the OLD FART.*

*His eyes are invisible beneath his fedora.*

*Slowly he claps. The light fades.*

### **Dance 9**

*The CAST create morosely artistic shapes. The effect is strangely peaceful.*

### **TWO WEEKS LATER. THE AFTERMATH.**

*The ACTOR sits on one of the chairs, numbed by daytime TV.  
We hear the voice-over. An info-mercial.  
He turns up the volume with the remote control.  
He's drinking beer and looks like he's let himself go.*

- MOIRA: Thanks, Bert. I have with me now Peter from Complete Pest Control. Nice to see you again, Peter. What do you have for us today?
- PETER: Well, Moira, I'm glad you asked that.  
I'm here today to talk about an innovative new pest control system called Hypno-Rat.
- MOIRA: Hypno-Rat?
- PETER: Hypno-Rat. It's completely silent, completely humane, completely effective.  
I guess that's why we call ourselves Complete Pest Control.
- MOIRA: That's great, Peter. I hate rats.
- PETER: Me too, Moira, that's why I'm in the business.
- MOIRA: Tell us a little more about Hypno-Rat.
- PETER: Well, this product operates without any messy and dangerous pellets or electric fields. Here we have a cheap, effective method of pest control developed by scientists in the United States that simply convinces the rats to leave and set up house elsewhere. Listen closely...
- He starts to make high pitched noises*
- ACTOR: Now that's acting.
- There is a knock at the door.  
The ACTOR turns down the volume.*
- ACTOR: I'm not home.

MATE: Yes you are. Let me in.

ACTOR: It's open.

*MATE barges in, holding a bunch of newspapers.*

MATE: What's the time?

ACTOR: Daytime.

MATE: Where's the remote?

ACTOR: Here.

*He pulls it out from under his arse and hands it to him.*

*MATE flicks through the channels until he finds what he's after.*

*It's a chat show. The lights come up on well-groomed hostess – KERRY, who is interviewing a mysterious, silhouetted FIGURE.*

KERRY: So, 'theatre streaking'. Why?

FIGURE: Why not?

*The FIGURE'S voice is disguised. It sounds an octave lower, underwater. Heavy metal.*

ACTOR: Oh, shit, you didn't.

MATE: I did.

KERRY: What possesses a grown man to run though a theatre, nude? Behaviour we've come to expect only from drunk people at sporting events?

*The FIGURE leans to one side and farts. Even through the voice processing, the sound is unmistakable.*

FIGURE: Wrap your nostrils around that one.

*The studio audience laughs.*

MATE: It's great TV, isn't it?

KERRY: Is what you do 'Art'? Or is it 'Anti-Art'?

FIGURE: I'd like to answer that question with another question, if I may, Kerry-Anne. When was the last time you went to the Theatre?

KERRY: Last week, actually, to see *[insert title of current mainstream theatre work here]*

FIGURE: Bugger. We haven't done that one yet. So, would you call *[title]* 'Art' or 'Anti-Art'?

KERRY: So you're planning to streak *[title]*?

FIGURE: That's a great idea.

*KERRY pursues her line of inquiry.*

KERRY: Don't you think streaking the show will spoil it for the audience?

FIGURE: On the contrary, Kerry-Anne, I think it'll enhance it.

KERRY: We now know there is more than one streaker. They've been identified by their...

FIGURE: Animal masks?

KERRY: No, their... penises.

FIGURE: I've always wanted to hear you say that word, Kerry-Anne.

KERRY: Why always men? Why no women?

FIGURE: Well, guys with their kit off are funny. Women in the nuddie are...well...

*The ACTOR wrests the remote control from his MATE and switches the TV off. The lights go out on KERRY-ANNE and the FIGURE.*

MATE: What's wrong with you? You're on the TV!

ACTOR: No I fucking wasn't. Who the fuck was that?

MATE: Just a mate. His name's on a need to know basis, and you don't need to know.

ACTOR: This is fucked! You've turned the whole thing into a joke.

MATE: It is a joke. Why aren't you laughing?

ACTOR: Because it's not funny anymore.

MATE: But it's working! Check these out!

*The ACTOR holds up the Courier Mail*

ACTOR: I've seen them. 'Nude Guy Runs Across Stage'. Read all about it.

*His MATE grabs the paper and reads it.*

MATE: This is a week old. Have you been out of the house at all?

ACTOR: No, I can't decide what to wear.

MATE: Fuck, man, look at these.

*He holds up the wad of newspapers.*

I'm going to make 'em spin, just like in the movies when something important happens.

*He throws one paper. It spins, just like in the movies.  
When it lands he proclaims:*

MATE: 'When Will Mysterious Streaker Strike Again?'

ACTOR: Yeah, yeah.

*MATE throws another one. It spins and lands.*

MATE: 'Pure Art or Just Pure Arse?'

*He throws another.*

ACTOR: Fantastic.

MATE: 'Pubic Art?' That's a good one. See? The 'L' has been crossed out of 'public'.

ACTOR: Where did they get the photos?

MATE: I sent them.

ACTOR: Who are they of?



MATE: Does it matter? While you've been sitting here not returning my calls, I've been a busy little bee. And let me tell you, it's been a fuckin' buzz.

ACTOR: You're out of your mind.

*MATE presents the last newspaper with a flourish.*

MATE: But check this out, this is the big one. The coup de gras.

*He doesn't throw it. he gets down on one knee and presents it to the ACTOR like a page boy.*

MATE: I am not worthy. You have created a monster.

*The ACTOR reads.*

ACTOR: 'Theatre Goes Through The Roof'. Lines of people waiting outside theatres have become a common sight throughout Brisbane in recent days as the anticipation of another strike of the infamous Theatre Streaker builds.

MATE: Good shit, eh? But read this! Down the bottom here.

ACTOR: Fuck off. I'm over it.

MATE: Give it to me then you dickhead, I'll read it. 'The recent production of Shakespeare's Henry the Fifth directed by blah blah has become the talk of the town with the radical shift the production has taken in the last week of its run... blah blah.

ACTOR: Can you say blah blah again?

MATE: Blah blah. We did it, you idiot. We made a difference. It's like the protesters in the sixties – when the cops, the lackeys of governments and multinationals move in for the kill, just get your gear off and they don't know what to do.

ACTOR: They throw you in jail

MATE: You're a spoilsport. You made a difference. That fucked up show you were in is now sold out. Theatre will never be the same again.

ACTOR: Right.

*MATE pulls some tickets out of his pocket*

MATE: What are you doing tonight?

ACTOR: Whatever you want, big boy.

MATE: Let's get pissed and go see some Shakespeare.

ACTOR: What's the 'big change' to the production?

MATE: I've got no idea.

ACTOR: There's only one way to find out.

MATE: That's the stuff. You said that just like you were in the movies.

ACTOR: Kiss me.

MATE: No.

ACTOR: Alright.

MATE: Maybe later.

ACTOR: OK.

ACTOR AND

MATE IN

UNISON: Let's do it!

*They 'high five' and the lights go out.*

### THIRD LARGEST THEATRE COMPANY 3

*Lights come up on ACTOR and MATE sitting in the auditorium. Both wear ties.*

*MATE has a packet of chips which he eats noisily.*

ACTOR: Shhh.

MATE: Why?

ACTOR: You don't eat chips in the theatre.

MATE: Why not?

ACTOR: It's rude.

MATE: You can talk, Mr Floppy. You tried to fart during this show. Remember?

ACTOR: Shut up. Do you know how hard it is for me to be back here?

MATE: I thought you didn't give a fuck.

ACTOR: Look around. The place is packed. It's disgusting.

MATE: Yeah, there were even people lined up. We did that, mate, we did it.

ACTOR: The production seems pretty much the same as it was. Let's streak it. That'll show 'em.

*He begins to surreptitiously loosen his trousers.*

MATE: No, mate. Hang on. Wait till the lights go out.

ACTOR: What?

*MATE smiles.*

MATE: Just wait.

ACTOR: Shh.

MATE: You look lovely.

ACTOR: Shut up. I'm trying to keep a low profile.

*He looks around nervously.  
The lights fade on their seats, leaving only their faces lit.*

*The stage glows, and a fanfare is heard. The CAST launch into their opening sequence*

KING: Now, herald, are the dead number'd?

*A stand-in Herald has taken ACTOR's place. She's attractive, and does all of the routine the ACTOR formally did, but with a strange allure. Something's afoot.*

HERALD: *[sexily]* Here is the number of the slaughtered French.

KING: What prisoners of good sort are taken, uncle?

EXETER: Charles Duke of Orleans, nephew to the King:

*Exeter removes an item of clothing with each of the names.*

John Duke of Bourbon, and Lord Bouciqualt:  
Of other lords and barons, knights and squires,  
Full fifteen hundred, besides common men.

*She's down to her undies. The music changes. Something sexy.*

*The KING also strips, slowly.*

KING: This note doth tell me of ten thousand French  
That in this field lie slain: of princes; in this number, and nobles  
bearing banners, there lie dead one hundred and twenty six: added  
to these, of knights, esquires, and gallant gentlemen,  
Eight thousand and four hundred; of the which  
Five hundred were but yesterday dubbed knights:

*Behind him, the CAST also start to disrobe.*

So that, in these ten thousand they have lost,  
There are but sixteen hundred mercenaries;  
The rest are princes, lords, knights, squires,  
And gentlemen of blood and quality  
the names of those their nobles lie dead:

MATE: This is great!

*He whoops and claps, munches and watches enthralled.  
The ACTOR is indignant.  
The nude Henry V continues beneath the following dialogue.*

ACTOR: So this is it? This is their big idea to resuscitate theatre as an artform?

MATE: The punters are loving it. Isn't this what you wanted?

ACTOR: I didn't know what I wanted.

MATE: What are you going to do?

*The ACTOR stares straight ahead, right through the ridiculous performance in front of him.*

*The ACTOR stands up in his seat.*

MATE: What are you doing?

ACTOR: The only thing there is left to do.

*MATE looks at the ACTOR and stands.*

*The music changes. Something like the theme to Chariots of Fire.*

*The ACTOR leaves his seat, also moving in slow motion.  
MATE follows. The music pumps.*

*And, like a moment of sporting glory in replay...*

*they run, fully clothed, through the nude performance.*

*EXETER and the NUDE GUY react in disgust, silently shouting at the ACTOR and the mate who are disappearing into the darkness.*

*The lights go out for the last time on the Third Largest Theatre Company's production of Henry V.*

*EXETER and the NUDE GUY wander off, shaking their heads as the lights fade.*

## OUTSIDE THE THEATRE

*A mixture of applause and angry calls is heard from inside the theatre.*

*MATE and ACTOR run onto the stage, puffed, exhilarated. They high five. Sirens can be heard.*

MATE: I think we just made a little history.

ACTOR: The world's first fully clothed streak. Let's get out of here.

MATE: You said that just like they do in the movies.

ACTOR: I'll never work in this town again.

MATE: Could be the best thing that never happened to you.

ACTOR: Yeah.

MATE: I'll get the car.

ACTOR: Righto.

*The light fades to a single spot on the actor. He notices the change of state and shrugs.*

*It looks like he's going to speak, offer a moral to the story. He isn't.*

*Slowly he claps, just like the OLD FART.*

*The sound of a crowd at a sporting ground swells and fades.*

*Blackout.*